

# Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan for the U.S. Department of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## U.S. Department of Education

Miguel A. Cardona  
*Secretary*

Matthew Soldner  
*Agency Evaluation Officer &  
Commissioner, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*

### AUGUST 2021

As part of its implementation of the *Foundations of Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018* (Evidence Act), the Department has determined the responsibilities for the Agency Evaluation Officer should rest with Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) Commissioner for the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE).

IES is the independent, non-partisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. The IES mission is to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

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# **Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan for the U.S. Department of Education**

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## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) and its predecessor organizations have supported evidence-building for the purpose of improving outcomes for all learners for more than 70 years.<sup>1</sup> This work has included rigorous implementation, outcome, and impact evaluations; grants to researchers for basic science, applied research, and evidence synthesis; and data collection in support of official statistics (including student assessments) and performance improvement.

Many of the Department's evidence-building activities are housed in its Institute of Education Sciences (IES), including its National Center for Education Evaluation (NCEE), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Center for Education Research (NCER), and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). However, a growing number of offices across the Department are engaged in work around evidence. Principal operating components with grant-making authority, for example, collect and use performance data to improve their programs, and an increasing number are requiring grantees to conduct research or evaluation activities that build evidence about the outcomes and impacts associated with their work. Increasingly, building and using evidence—be it in small ways or large—is everyone's business at the Department of Education.

In its inaugural *Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan* (Plan), the Department summarizes only those major evidence-building activities for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 22) sponsored by NCEE. We include both new work that is under consideration for FY 22 as well as continuing activities begun in a prior year.<sup>2</sup> In future years, the contents of the Plan may grow to include evidence-building activities housed elsewhere in the Department.

### Organization and Contents of this Document

This Plan is organized topically, using categories that represent both common areas of focus in education research and long-standing programmatic interests of the Department. Within each topic area, we detail significant evaluations (described below). Activities are listed only once and are “cross-referenced” in other sections, where applicable.

The Department is currently developing its FY22-FY26 Agency Learning Agenda. Because that process is ongoing as of the release of this Plan, we instead highlight how the work described here aligns to the *Secretary's Proposed Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs* (SPPs). The SPPs reflect Secretary Cardona's vision for the nation's education system, which *includes a respect for*

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the *Cooperative Research Act of 1954* (Pub. L. 531).

<sup>2</sup> No part of this document represents a commitment by the U.S. Department of Education to award a new, or continue an existing, contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.

*the dignity and potential of each and every student and their access to educational opportunity.* Proposed priorities include:

- (1) Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty;
- (2) Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments;
- (3) Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning;
- (4) Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs;
- (5) Increasing postsecondary education access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success; and
- (6) Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change.

Readers will note that the work implied by the SPPs does not uniformly align with the actual planned and ongoing work described in this Plan.

In particular, there is significant work listed in the Plan that is beyond the immediate scope of the SPPs. One reason for the expanded scope is that the Department has chosen to operationalize its obligation to include “significant evaluations” in the Plan by listing *all* of its planned and ongoing program evaluations—including those that represent persistent problems of education policy or practice but that are not otherwise aligned to the SPPs. This approach is consistent with our annual and biennial reporting of all program evaluations as part of our Annual Performance Report/Annual Performance Plan and the Institute’s Biennial Report to Congress, respectively, as well as a separate biennial report to Congress on the use of evaluation funds authorized under Section 8601 of the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA). A second reason is that Congress can require evaluation activities not aligned to the SPPs, but the Department considers these efforts to be significant as well.

Similarly, there are SPPs for which there is limited or no work listed in this Plan. In rare instances, this is because a topic included in the SPPs is of new-found importance to the Department. More often, topics appear in the SPPs but do not include work in this Plan because federal resources have not yet been identified to address them. The most notable example is the Department’s emphasis on building evidence related to making postsecondary education affordable through federal financial aid (SPP 5). Unlike ESSA, its K-12 analog, neither the *Higher Education Act of 1965* nor its subsequent reauthorizations include funded evaluation authorities for the bulk of its programs. As a result, evaluation activities related to federal student aid must “compete” with other important work, including customer service improvements and infrastructure modernization, for limited administration funds.

The Department anticipates that, over time, its Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plans will come to mirror its Learning Agenda. Wherever possible, the Department intends to use its Learning Agenda to guide decision-making about where to invest evidence-building resources. Additionally, the Department hopes to develop new mechanisms for building evidence, including new partnerships with

external researchers that provide opportunities for answering questions of shared interest. It is important to remember, however, that the Department's evidence-building resources are not fungible: resources authorized for one purpose cannot be applied to another, no matter how strongly felt the need for evaluation. As such, areas without dedicated funding should be expected to lag those with more resources.

### **How We Describe Our Program Evaluations**

Each program evaluation described below is uniquely tailored to address a series of evaluation questions co-created by NCEE's professional evaluators, program office staff, and external stakeholders. For each evaluation, we detail: (a) whether it is aligned to at least one SPP; (b) its current status; (c) expected start and end date; (d) the issues, contexts, and problems that motivate the evaluation activity; (e) the evaluation questions it seeks to answer; (f) evaluation design and data sources; and (g) the publications and products that are expected to arise from the evaluation.

Although each program evaluation is substantively different on most dimensions, there are some commonalities that, for the sake of parsimony, we describe here. These include common technical challenges and common approaches to disseminating evaluation findings to key stakeholders.

#### *Common Technical Challenges*

Virtually all of the Department's program evaluations face one of two challenges: (1) access to administrative data that are necessary to generate high-quality evidence or (2) obtaining high response rates to surveys. In some instances, both challenges are at play.

Wherever possible, the Department relies on administrative data for its evaluation activities. Doing so is widely held to improve data quality, minimize respondent burden, and reduce cost. Reliance upon administrative data for the purpose of understanding students, student outcomes, and education institutions is particularly compelling due to the Department's longstanding financial investment in the development of state longitudinal data systems (SLDSs), which increasingly link data from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education to the workforce and beyond.

Unfortunately, the Department often has challenges accessing administrative data, be it held in SLDSs or with federal agency partners. States, citing their own privacy laws, may restrict access to SLDS data in whole or in part. When access is granted, it is often only for the period of time needed to conduct the analysis, after which the underlying student record level data must be destroyed. While this yields an estimate "in the moment," it runs counter to other Department (and government-wide) priorities including open data, transparency, and replicability. This same challenge—and others—emerges in collaborative work with federal partners. Privacy Act System of Record Notices (SORNs) may fail to include evaluation as a routine use; legislation may allow the sharing of data for enforcement purposes but not program evaluation; or agency practice may hinder matching by requiring Social Security Numbers be provided for all sample members, even in populations for which it is difficult to get them (*e.g.*, children) and even when probabilistic matching schemes using other identifiers are likely to yield credible results.

When administrative data are not widely available, the Department often must rely upon survey instruments to collect data directly from respondents including students, parents, and educators. It is

well-known across the federal statistical community that response rates to web-based and other survey collections are in decline. The Department is not immune from this trend. The Department employs industry standard approaches to, initially, maximize response rates. Once collected, the Department subjects data to rigorous non-response bias analysis to ensure that they can support credible estimates and rigorous analysis. There is a practical limit, however, to what can be done to improve response either *ex ante* or *ex post* and, at some point, the integrity of the evidence-building activity is threatened. Should the downward trend in survey response rate continue, program evaluation will be threatened—particularly if administrative data that might serve as a substitute or proxy cannot be readily accessed.

#### *Common Dissemination Approaches*

IES follows a consistent approach to dissemination for the bulk of its evidence products, including findings from program evaluations, official statistics, and evidence syntheses. This includes:

- Internal briefings for the Department’s policy and program leadership during a two-week period prior to a product’s release by IES;
- Sharing products with relevant media outlets, subject to an embargo agreement, immediately before their release;
- Posting products to the Department’s website;
- Announcing the release of new products using IES social media, including its NewsFlash listserv (46,000 subscribers) and its @IESResearch Twitter handle (20,000 followers);
- Leveraging the Department’s Regional Comprehensive Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories to disseminate relevant products directly to regional, state, and local education stakeholders; and
- Presenting findings to conferences of relevant grantees, advocacy organizations, and education researchers, such as the annual meetings of the Council on Opportunity in Education, the National Association of ESEA State Programs Administrators, and the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

## Crosswalk of Planned and Ongoing Program Evaluations to SPPs

We list program evaluations underway or planned to begin in FY 22 associated with each of the SPPs in the table below. We do not include “anticipated” studies in the table below, as specific research questions for anticipated studies have not been finalized. No part of this document represents a commitment by the U.S. Department of Education to award a new, or continue an existing, contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.

Note that several priority questions listed below are addressed by other evidence-building activities across the Department that are not listed here, including those sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Centers for Education and Special Education Research.

SPP	Related Program Evaluations
<p>Priority 1. Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty</p>	<p><a href="#">Implementation of Key Federal Education Policies in the Wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluating Implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V</a></p>
<p>Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments</p>	<p><a href="#">Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of School Improvement Plans and Their Implementation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Educational Policies, Supports and Practices for English Learners: Implementation of Title III, With a Focus on Social and Emotional Learning</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Data Disaggregation Initiative</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)</a></p> <p><a href="#">State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds</a></p>

SPP	Related Program Evaluations
	<p><a href="#">Evaluating Implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Investing in Innovation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Effects of a Systematic Approach to Improving Quality in Afterschool Programs: An Impact Evaluation to Inform the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Study of Magnet Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Charter School Admission Practices and Barriers to Growth</a></p>
<p>Priority 3. Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning</p>	<p><a href="#">Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives</a></p> <p><a href="#">Implementation Evaluation of the Title III National Professional Development Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation of Teacher Residency Programs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program</a></p>
<p>Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs</p>	<p><a href="#">Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of School Improvement Plans and Their Implementation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluating Implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees</a></p>

SPP	Related Program Evaluations
	<p><a href="#">Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation of Departmentalized Instruction in Elementary Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Educational Policies, Supports and Practices for English Learners: Implementation of Title III, With a Focus on Social and Emotional Learning</a></p>
<p>Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary education access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success</p>	<p><a href="#">Effectiveness of Promising Strategies in Federal College Access Programs: A Study of Financial Aid Supports for GEAR UP Students</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment in the Federal Work Study Program to Encourage Student Jobs in the Private Sector</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment Requiring Additional Loan Counseling for Student Borrowers</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Study of the Implementation of Adult Education Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act</a></p> <p><a href="#">Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education Design Study</a></p> <p><a href="#">Text Ed: A Study of Text Messaging to Improve College Enrollment Rates Among Disadvantaged Adults</a></p>

SPP	Related Program Evaluations
Priority 6. Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change	<a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a> <a href="#">Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods</a>

# Behavior and Attendance

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools](#)
- [The Effects of a Systematic Approach to Improving Quality in Afterschool Programs: An Impact Evaluation to Inform the 21st Century Community Learning Centers \(CCLC\) Program](#); listed below in the [School Improvement](#) topic area.

## Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 6. Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change	Study design is being refined	November 2019 - May 2024

### **Background**

Children living in distressed communities face significant academic, social, and health challenges, many of which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The Full-Service Community Schools program aims to address these challenges by funding coordination and expansion of a comprehensive set of educational and developmental services for students, their families, and the broader community. Grants typically go to school districts and community-based organizations. Since 2010, Congress has invested \$55 million in the program, which is authorized by Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Congress also mandated an evaluation of the program, which this study will fulfill.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the effects of the Full-Service Community Schools grants or a core component of the grants on student outcomes?
- What services are offered by the grants, and how are they connected and coordinated? What challenges do grantees face, and how are they addressed?
- How many students and families are served by the grants and at what cost?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will assess the effects of Full-Service Community Schools as rigorously as possible. Among the study designs being considered are: A random assignment study of a future cohort of grantees; a study that compares the outcomes of prior grantees' schools to similar schools that did not receive a grant; or a random assignment study that measures the impact of a core component of Full-Service Community Schools. Data collection will include administrative records on student outcomes such as attendance, behavior, and achievement test scores, as well as grantee surveys and annual performance reports to describe program implementation.

### **Publications and Products**

- The report is expected in 2024 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Early Learning

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices](#)
- [State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act](#); listed below in the [Students with Disabilities](#) topic area.

## Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Efficacy trial is underway	November 2013 - November 2022

### **Background**

Experiences in early childhood programs can help young children, including those with disabilities, develop skills important for classroom learning. But many children need help to strengthen their social-emotional skills and facilitate their engagement in classroom activities. Currently, there is limited evidence on how to effectively integrate these kinds of supports into the general curriculum, particularly in classrooms where children with disabilities are served alongside their peers as promoted by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The objectives of this evaluation are twofold: (1) to provide nationally representative descriptive information about preschool special education programs and the curricula or interventions being delivered to preschool children with disabilities, and (2) to assess the feasibility of a large-scale impact study by conducting an efficacy study piloting the integration of targeted instructional supports for children with disabilities with an evidence-based curriculum and promotes the language/literacy, and social-emotional skills of children with disabilities in inclusive preschool classrooms.

### **Research Questions**

- Which curricula and strategies are used nationally for preschool children with disabilities to promote learning of language, literacy, and social emotional skills?
- In what settings, and using what program structures, are these curricula and interventions being used with preschool children with disabilities?
- What level of implementation is achieved for the programs that integrate targeted instructional supports for children with disabilities with an evidence-based curriculum? Are teachers able to successfully implement a new approach that integrates targeted instructional supports for children who demonstrate risk for social-emotional delays or persistent behavior challenges with instruction for all children?
- What are the intervention program's impacts on the classroom environment and the social-emotional/behavioral skills and language outcomes of children in inclusive preschool classrooms? What are the impacts of this approach on the classroom environment and the social-emotional, behavioral, and language skills of children with and without disabilities inclusive preschool classrooms?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To help plan for the efficacy study, information was collected in spring/summer 2015 on the programs, curricula, and extra supports available to children ages 3 through 5 identified for special education services. This collection was based on surveys of state agency staff coordinating grants and services

under IDEA Part B Section 619 and a nationally representative sample of district preschool special education coordinators. The study randomly assigned 34 inclusive preschool classrooms in 29 schools from three districts to either receive training and coaching support to implement the study's program integration approach or continue with the teachers' regular program and practices. The addition and integration of the programs began in classrooms in 2019. Although data on participating preschool students was to be collected for 2 school years, the coronavirus pandemic disrupted these activities and teachers' willingness to continue to participate in them. The efficacy's study's analyses will be based on documentation of training provided to teachers, classroom observations to assess how program components are being implemented, teacher surveys, and their rating of children's social skills.

### **Publications and Products**

A series of tables describing the characteristics of preschool education services and practices was released in August 2020. See: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/2020003/>. The report for the efficacy study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# English Learners

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Implementation Evaluation of the Title III National Professional Development Program](#)
- [Study of Data Disaggregation Initiative](#)
- [Study of Educational Policies, Supports and Practices for English Learners: Implementation of Title III, with a focus on Social and Emotional Learning](#)
- Impact Study of English Learner Reclassification Policies (anticipated)

# Implementation Evaluation of the Title III National Professional Development Program

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 3. Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning	Data collection is underway	June 2020 - June 2022

## Background

A key challenge for states and school districts nationwide is how to meet the demand for teachers with the knowledge and skills to support English learners' English proficiency and mastery of content knowledge. The National Professional Development (NPD) program, authorized by *Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, supports institutions of higher education in partnership with states and districts as they strive to meet this demand and improve classroom instruction for ELs. This evaluation will describe teacher preparation and professional development approaches used by NPD grantees, in order to add to what is known about strategies that may be promising to improve educator capacity to serve English learners. Such promising strategies may be evaluated in the future to determine their impact on teachers and students.

## Research Questions

- What are the goals of NPD-funded projects, and what strategies are grantees implementing to address those goals?
- What factors facilitate or hinder grantees' implementation of NPD program strategies? What challenges have grantees and participants identified to adequately prepare EL teachers in general?
- How have NPD grantees changed EL-related teacher preparation and professional development?
- What are pre-service and in-service educators' perceptions of the content and usefulness of the NPD-supported activities in which they participated?

## Design and Analytic Considerations

Surveys of all 2016 and 2017 NPD grantees, a representative survey of NPD program participants, and interviews with state and LEA partners are being conducted in Spring/Summer 2021. The evaluation also draws on existing information from grantees' applications and annual performance data. Responses to survey questions will be tabulated into descriptive statistics (such as percentages) and simple statistical tests (such as tests for differences between percentages). A component of the study that will assess the feasibility and design of a future impact evaluation is based on interviews with about 9 SEA grantees and 9 LEA subgrantees conducted in Winter 2019.

## **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Study of Data Disaggregation Initiative

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Data collection is underway	September 2020 - December 2021

### **Background**

Because English learners (ELs) are a diverse group, looking at their academic achievement in the aggregate may hide important opportunities to identify challenges and target services to help particular subsets of them. In 2016, the Office of English Language Acquisition of the U.S. Department of Education awarded grants to three states – Minnesota, Hawaii, and Washington under the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Data Disaggregation Initiative to examine this issue. The grants are intended to support state education agency (SEAs) efforts to refine their data systems by further disaggregating the AAPI EL students into smaller subgroups; and then using the more detailed data to improve instructional programs, initiatives, or other services. This evaluation will provide information about grantees' activities and challenges to help inform future policy and practice related to data disaggregation.

### **Research Questions**

- What data were collected and how? How were they analyzed? What hindered and/or facilitated data collection or analysis?
- How did states and districts use the disaggregated data to support improved instruction for ELs? What were the challenges to data usage? What activities did they report as being key?
- What is required to sustain and scale these efforts?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study will focus on the experiences of the three states and their participating LEAs receiving the grants. Data are being collected in Spring/Summer 2021 and include interviews of: i) the state grantees, ii) about nine LEAs participating in the grant activities across those states, and iii) independent evaluators associated with each state grant and key partners such as community-based organizations, where applicable. The evaluation also draws on existing information from grantees' applications, annual performance data, and a review of information from the project-level evaluations, where available.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Study of Educational Policies, Supports and Practices for English Learners: Implementation of Title III, With a Focus on Social and Emotional Learning

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Study design is being refined	September 2019 - September 2023

## **Background**

English learners face disproportionate educational challenges because they must master subject-matter content while also developing English proficiency. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides funds to states and districts to help ELs attain English proficiency and to close the significant achievement gaps in reading and math between ELs and their non-EL peers. The 2015 reauthorization of ESEA as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) made changes to federal policy related to ELs and state and district activities under Title III. This study will provide a national portrait of Title III under ESSA and the strategies states, districts, and schools use to meet the needs of ELs more generally. A particular focus will be on approaches to support social and emotional learning, given the challenges of engaging and serving ELs during the coronavirus pandemic.

## **Research Questions**

- What curricula, methods of instruction, and supports do districts and schools use to promote English proficiency and academic achievement for ELs?
- How are states and districts implementing statewide entrance and exit procedures and assessing students for EL status and English proficiency? How do these processes relate to the changed accountability provisions in ESSA for ELs?
- What strategies are states and districts using to improve EL educator effectiveness? What are the certification requirements to teach ELs in each state?
- What are the social and emotional learning needs of ELs and how do districts and schools identify and support those needs?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

Surveys of all state Title III coordinators and nationally-representative samples of districts and schools were delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Some in-depth data is being collected in Spring/Summer 2021 but the surveys will be conducted in Spring 2022. The evaluation also draws on existing data, such as information from ESSA state plan and the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data and the Civil Rights Data Collection. The study is descriptive and not designed to estimate the impact of federal policies on state and local actions.

## **Publications and Products**

The first report will examine the role of EL students in schools' overall performance and in schools' ESSA accountability designation as needing improvement and additional support. The report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Literacy

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants](#)
- [Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School](#)

## National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant Program

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Report preparation is underway	May 2018 - October 2023

### **Background**

Many U.S. students still do not acquire even basic literacy skills. Students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) are especially at risk. In fourth grade, the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows a substantial gap in reading achievement between students from high-income families (average score at about the 65th percentile) and students from low-income families (average score at about the 35th percentile). To narrow this gap, in 2011 the federal government launched the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) program under the Title I demonstration authority of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The most recent reauthorization of the ESEA created a successor to SRCL, the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant program. The CLSD Program awards competitive grants to SEAs that then provide subgrants to LEAs and early learning providers. Both the SRCL and CLSD programs intend subgrantees to implement evidence-based comprehensive literacy instruction. The ultimate goal of both programs is to advance literacy skills for students from birth through grade 12, with an emphasis on disadvantaged students. For both programs Congress mandated that a national evaluation be conducted.

### **Research Questions**

#### Implementation Evaluation of SRCL

- How do SEAs make subgrant award decisions?
- What technical assistance do the SEAs provide to their subgrantees?
- How do the SEAs inform continuous improvement and evaluate subgrantees' projects?
- How do subgrantees target SRCL program awards to eligible schools and early learning programs?
- What literacy interventions and practices are used by SRCL schools and early learning programs?
- To what extent are SRCL-funded practices supported by evidence?
- What are the literacy outcomes for students in SRCL schools and early learning programs?

#### Design and Execution of an Impact Study of CLSD

- What is the impact of the CLSD program or CLSD-funded practices on classroom reading instruction?
- What is the impact of the CLSD program or CLSD-funded practices on student reading outcomes?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The SRCL implementation evaluation includes grant application reviews, annual grantee interviews, surveys of all subgrantees in Spring 2019, surveys of principals and teachers in a representative sample of 500 funded schools in Spring 2019 and Spring 2020, and collection of state and local extant reading/language arts assessment data. The evaluation will also conduct evidence reviews of practices commonly funded by SRCL, and conduct observations and interviews to measure classroom instruction more in-depth in a sample of 100 classrooms in 50 schools.

Plans are underway to conduct an impact study, building on earlier interviews conduct with about 9 SEA grantees and LEA subgrantees in Winter 2019.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the SRCL implementation evaluation is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Study design is being refined	September 2018 - August 2024

### **Background**

A third of US students fail to develop foundational reading skills necessary to succeed academically, and students with disabilities (SWDs) do so at higher rates than their peers without disabilities. Stakeholders have increasingly turned to the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support for reading (MTSS-R) with the goal of addressing this issue. MTSS-R is a framework for providing high-quality reading instruction for all students to help prevent or mitigate reading issues, identifying students needing supplemental or more intensive supports such as those who have a specific learning disability, and providing these supports for those who need it.

MTSS-R implementation is consistent with the goals of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and so has been promoted and supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. Almost all state education agencies encourage districts to implement MTSS-R and districts commonly report that they do. However, a recent ED-sponsored study found that schools are not universally implementing the model in ways that align with best practice. Improving educators' training on MTSS-R may be one way to strengthen its implementation and, ultimately, yield better outcomes for students.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the initial impacts of training in the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support for reading on school staff practice including the provision of early reading instruction and targeted supports?
- What is the impact of training in the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support for reading on student literacy? For students at risk of failing to develop foundational reading skills?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This is a randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of two MTSS-R training programs on school staff practice and student literacy outcomes in grades 1 and 2. Approximately 100 schools will be randomly assigned to either training in MTSS-R or a business-as-usual control group. The MTSS-R training will focus on four core components: (a) differentiated and explicit instruction for all students (Tier I), (b) evidence-based intervention for at-risk students (Tier II), (c) screening and progress monitoring to assign students to instructional tiers, and (d) MTSS-R infrastructure. Treatment schools will receive training and ongoing technical assistance in MTSS-R prior to and across two school-years,

2020-2021 and 2021-2022, and implement MTSS-R across these two years. Implementation of the study was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Data collection includes documentation of training delivery, a teacher survey, reading specialist survey, site visits, student records data, and individual student testing. These data will be collected across both implementation years and will be analyzed to answer the study's research questions.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2024 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Parent Engagement

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluating Implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program](#)
- [Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods](#)
- [Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools](#); listed above in the *[Behavior and Attendance](#)* topic area.

## Evaluating Implementation of the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Study design is underway	September 2020 - September 2022

### **Background**

Despite the important role family engagement may play in children's educational progress, families below the poverty line are significantly less likely than others to be involved in their child's schooling. The Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) is one of the key U.S. Department of Education programs designed to close this gap. Funded for the first time in 2018, SFEC builds on an earlier program and provides grants to partnerships of education organizations and their states. The partners are expected to both deliver services directly to families to increase their engagement and to provide technical assistance and training to state, district, and school staff to help them help families. This study will describe the work of the first 12 grantees, focusing on the extent to which certain program priorities are being implemented. The results are intended to help federal policy makers refine the goals and objectives of the SFEC program, as well as inform the work of education organizations and state and local education agencies beyond the current grantees to improve their work with families.

### **Research Questions**

- What services do grantees prioritize?
- How do they decide which services or activities to provide?
- Whom do the grantees serve?
- What are grantees' greatest challenges in meeting the objectives of the grants, including how the coronavirus pandemic influenced the provision of services and activities?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This is a descriptive study, to better understand grantee implementation. Data will be collected primarily through surveys and follow-up interviews with the 12 SFEC grantee project directors and their 13 state counterparts in Fall/Winter 2021. Implementation of the study was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 6. Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change	Study design is being refined	September 2018 - August 2024

### **Background**

The federal Promise Neighborhoods program supports nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, Indian tribes, and their partners in providing comprehensive, coordinated services for children, their families, and others in distressed communities. The broad range of possible services and focus on coordination are meant to build a pipeline of educational and developmental supports from "cradle to career" for children and to benefit the community at large. These services may be directed at improving academic, social, health and mental health, family and community engagement, crime prevention and rehabilitation, and workforce readiness outcomes.

The program, authorized under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (or ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA), awarded its first grants in 2010. This first ever national evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods is mandated by ESSA.

### **Research Questions**

- What does Promise Neighborhoods look like in the field: What services are offered and by whom? How are services connected and coordinated? How many students and their families receive each service? What is the total cost per year per participant? What challenges do grantees face, and how are they addressed?
- How do the services compare to those offered prior to the Promise Neighborhoods grant and to those offered in other, similar neighborhoods without grants?
- Do children in Promise Neighborhoods have greater improvements in outcomes over time than children from other, similar neighborhoods without grants?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will describe how the program is implemented using surveys of grantees and data from grantees' annual reporting to the Department. The study will also compare outcomes in Promise Neighborhoods before and after the grant award to the same outcomes for other neighborhoods that were similar but not served by a Promise Neighborhood grant. The outcomes will be collected through state birth records (to identify children living in the neighborhoods over time) and administrative student records such as student test scores on state assessments, attendance, and high school graduation rates.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Pathways to Career or College

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Effectiveness of Promising Strategies in Federal College Access Programs: A Study of Financial Aid Supports for GEAR UP Students](#)
- [National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V](#)
- [National Study of the Implementation of Adult Education Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)
- [Text Ed: A Study of Text Messaging to Improve College Enrollment Rates Among Disadvantaged Adults](#)
- [Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment Requiring Additional Loan Counseling for Student Borrowers](#)
- [Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment in the Federal Work Study Program to Encourage Student Jobs in the Private Sector](#)

# Effectiveness of Promising Strategies in Federal College Access Programs: A Study of Financial Aid Supports for GEAR UP Students

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Data collection is underway	July 2020 - February 2023

## **Background**

Scholarships to support college enrollment and persistence can be critical for low-income students, including those in the high need schools that participate in Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). Providing scholarships distinguishes GEAR UP from other federal college access programs, but little is known about how and to whom state grantees distribute the aid. The 2008 Higher Education Act (HEA) changed some requirements for this GEAR UP component, restricting it in some ways but giving states more flexibility in other ways. HEA also requires the U.S. Department of Education to evaluate the scholarship component, a mandate this study will fulfill.

## **Research Questions**

- To what extent do state grantee policies and practices emphasize access to scholarships for GEAR UP students?
- How do state grantees allocate their resources between scholarships and other state and local GEAR UP efforts?
- What challenges do state grantees face in administering GEAR UP scholarships and other aspects of the program?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study will focus on interviews with state grantee project directors and scholarship administrators, if relevant, who oversee approximately 42 state GEAR UP grants. The interviews are being conducted in Spring/Summer 2021. Data on the total number of students receiving scholarships and scholarship amounts, will also be collected. These data will be analyzed to address the study's three research questions.

## **Publications and Products**

The report for this study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Study design is underway	September 2019 - January 2024

### **Background**

Even with constant change in the nature of work and the economy, the education decisions students make today will influence their later career direction and success. Helping secondary and postsecondary students develop skills that have value in the workplace is the key goal of career and technical education (CTE). Congress has supported CTE for over a century, most recently through the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in 2018 (Perkins V). Many provisions of the prior Perkins Act remain, but Perkins V includes some changes designed to: (1) enhance CTE program quality through new mechanisms for program improvement and labor market alignment, (2) increase flexibility in Perkins funding and accountability, and (3) promote equity by expanding exposure to and participation in CTE for all students. Perkins V requires IES to conduct this national evaluation to assess CTE programs under the new law.

### **Research Questions**

- How, and to what extent, does current CTE implementation reflect key policy goals and objectives of Perkins V? What challenges do State agencies and local recipients face in administering and delivering CTE services, particularly the newly introduced provisions in Perkins V?
- In what important ways has CTE implementation evolved since the prior version of the Perkins Act?
- How are CTE participation and outcomes changing?
- What is known about the effectiveness of CTE strategies and practices, particularly those that are allowable under Perkins V?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The national evaluation will draw on a variety of data sources and studies for its assessment of CTE, though the design is still being finalized. New surveys of all state directors of CTE and a nationally representative sample of district coordinators of CTE will be conducted in fall 2022 to collect information about Perkins implementation. Trends in CTE participation and outcomes will be obtained by analyzing other national data, including those from the National Center for Education Statistics, state-submitted Perkins V performance reports, and labor market repositories. To identify and report

on the effectiveness of key CTE strategies, the evaluation will review rigorously conducted research, where it already exists, and consider conducting new studies of CTE approaches deemed most critical to the field's improvement.

### **Publications and Products**

IES is required to report to Congress on results from the evaluation every two years. An interim report is currently due in 2021, a final report in 2023, and biennial updates are expected thereafter. These publications will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## National Study of the Implementation of Adult Education Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Report preparation is underway	September 2017 - March 2023

### **Background**

Higher-level skills are increasingly required to succeed in the American workforce, and yet many adults in the United States lack them. Over 25 million adults have not earned a high school diploma or GED. Even among those with at least a secondary credential, a lack of proficiency with the English language can be a significant barrier to a family-sustaining income and to full integration as citizens. Congress has sought to help individuals address these challenges—and the nation's workforce development needs—by providing funds for adult education. Most recently, Title II of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides funding to States that fund local programs designed to assist adults in obtaining the education credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency. The programs serve adults with varying levels of literacy, English proficiency, and educational attainment. The Fiscal Year 2017 appropriation for Title II was approximately \$580 million. In Program Year 2015, 1,525,878 eligible individuals were served through programs receiving Title II funding.

WIOA is a departure from its legislative predecessor (the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) in several ways. For instance, in specifying state and local responsibilities and program features, WIOA now includes a clearer link between adult education and workforce development, an expansion in opportunities to serve particular subpopulations of adults (such as English learners), and greater emphasis on performance accountability and program effectiveness information.

WIOA mandates an independent national evaluation of adult education programs funded under Title II. A part of the national evaluation, this study is designed to provide implementation information on such programs, with a focus on how the changes contained in WIOA appear to be shaping the services provided by adult education programs and the populations such programs serve.

### **Research Questions**

- How - and to what extent - are the changes to adult education policies and practices promoted by WIOA being implemented?
- Beyond the changes to adult education promoted by WIOA, in what other important ways has implementation evolved since prior to the enactment of the law?
- What challenges do State agencies and local providers currently face in administering and delivering adult education services?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The study is descriptive and primarily involves collection and tabulation of data from surveys. It includes a survey of adult education State Directors and a survey of adult education providers in the states and the District of Columbia that received federal funds in program year 2018-2019. Some key findings from the provider survey will be compared with findings from an earlier national survey of providers, conducted in 2003. This will allow for an assessment of the extent to which adult education programs have evolved since prior to the enactment of WIOA. The study will also include analyses of extant data such as state- and provider-level data collected for the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education's National Reporting System. This includes information on adult education programs funded, populations served, and participant outcomes achieved. This data will be used to provide further contextual information about adult education programs and populations.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's first report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education Design Study

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Report preparation is underway	September 2018 - December 2027

## **Background**

Nearly 43 million U.S. adults lack the basic English literacy skills required to succeed in the workforce and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 is the key federal effort to help adults acquire these and other important skills, as well as to earn a high school equivalency credential. WIOA encourages adult education programs to use evidence-based strategies to improve services and participant success, yet few strategies have rigorous research supporting them. Federal policy makers sought to fix this knowledge gap by mandating in WIOA that ED carry out an independent evaluation of adult education programs and services that includes identifying effective practices. As part of ED's National Assessment of Adult Education, this study examines evidence from existing studies of adult education strategies as well as designs new studies, with a particular focus on WIOA's new emphases for policy and practice.

## **Research Questions**

- What is known about the effectiveness of adult education strategies?
- What adult education strategies not already well-studied are feasible to examine with an impact study? How might those studies be designed?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

A systematic evidence review was conducted to summarize findings from existing studies of adult education strategies and identify gaps in the knowledge base. Based on findings from this review, discussions with state and local stakeholders and other policy experts, and review of program documents, the study team identified two strategies for which measuring effectiveness would substantially benefit the field—training for career navigators and Integrated Education and Training programs for learners—and developed design options for impact studies. ED may elect to conduct studies of one or both of these strategies, beginning as early as 2021.

## **Publications and Products**

A snapshot titled [Adult Education Strategies: Identifying and Building Evidence of Effectiveness](#) was released in April 2021. The next report from the study is expected in 2024 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Text Ed: A Study of Text Messaging to Improve College Enrollment Rates Among Disadvantaged Adults

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Data collection is underway	August 2016 - November 2022

### **Background**

Postsecondary education is associated with later economic success, but individuals who are low income or potential first-generation college goers are less likely to enroll in college compared to their more advantaged peers. The U.S. Department of Education's Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) program—one of the federal TRIO programs—awards grants, typically to institutes of higher education, aimed at increasing the number of disadvantaged adults who enroll in postsecondary education. EOC grantees provide informational services related to college admissions and financial aid options. Each EOC serves a minimum of 1,000 individuals per year, with these individuals generally spread over a wide geographic area. In fiscal year 2015, the Department awarded 126 grants, totaling \$46.6 million. On average, grantees spent \$246 per participant.

The study examines a promising strategy designed to help EOC grantees meet the program's goal of increasing college enrollment. It tests the effectiveness of a low-cost enhancement to grantee services—a systematic set of text messages that include timely, personalized information concerning college enrollment activities and deadlines, resources for overcoming common barriers to enrollment, and an easy way to connect EOC participants with center staff to answer questions and provide further assistance.

### **Research Questions**

- Does providing personalized text messages to EOC participants increase Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates?
- Do the messages increase the likelihood of EOC participants enrolling in postsecondary education?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

Eighteen EOC grantees are participating in the study. Within each grantee site, eligible participants were randomly assigned to receive either the grantee's typical services or the study's messages in addition to the grantee's typical services. About 3,600 participants were assigned on a rolling basis from Spring 2018 through Spring 2020. Participant background information, as well as information required for the customization of messages (for example, the postsecondary institution at which the participant wishes to enroll), are being obtained from grantee records. FAFSA completion will be measured using administrative records from the U.S. Department of Education for Fall 2018 through

Fall 2020. Whether participants enroll in college will be measured based on National Student Clearinghouse records for Fall 2018 through Fall 2020.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment Requiring Additional Loan Counseling for Student Borrowers

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Report preparation is underway	September 2019– September 2022

## **Background**

Roughly two out of three students take out loans to pay for college, requiring them to make consequential decisions about how much to borrow and which type of loans. But many students lack the financial knowledge and skills to make good choices, underscored by the more than 500,000 who default on their loans each year. Colleges can only require federal loan borrowers to complete short, one-time counseling before receiving their loans (“entrance”) and when they leave school (“exit”). To help these borrowers manage their debt, the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA), under the Experimental Sites Initiative authorized by section 487A(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, is allowing colleges to require student borrowers to participate in additional annual loan counseling in the years between the already-mandated entrance and exit counseling. The Institute of Education Sciences is assessing the effectiveness of these waivers on students’ borrowing and college progress and, later, loan repayment.

## **Research Questions**

- What types of colleges participated in the Loan Counseling Experiment and what kinds of additional loan counseling did they require?
- Are student borrowers who receive three years of additional loan counseling more likely than their peers who do not receive additional loan counseling to take loans with better terms, borrow an affordable amount, and persist in college?
- Do the effects of requiring three years of additional loan counseling vary by key characteristics of the students, the colleges they attend, or the kind of counseling provided?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

A total of 39 colleges volunteered to participate in the Loan Counseling Experiment. These schools estimated identifying approximately 100,000 students who were eligible to participate in the experiment between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 financial aid award years. Students were randomly assigned to either complete the additional required loan counseling (once per year) or not complete any additional counseling. Participating colleges had discretion over the content, and delivery of the loan counseling they could require, and reported on it through an annual survey conducted by FSA.

Students' borrowing and school progress are being measured using administrative records from the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA).

### **Publications and Products**

The study report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Evaluations of Federal Financial Aid Information and Delivery Strategies: An Experiment in the Federal Work Study Program to Encourage Student Jobs in the Private Sector

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Study design is being refined	September 2020– September 2023

## **Background**

Most students work while enrolled in postsecondary education, but the jobs are more likely to connect to students’ course of study or longer-term professional goals if they are higher-income. To help address this inequity, the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) is conducting an experiment to test the effects of granting colleges flexibility in how they carry out the Federal Work Study (FWS) program. FWS provides participating colleges over \$1 billion to support employment of college students with financial need to help pay education expenses. Currently about 92 percent of FWS dollars are spent supporting students in on-campus employment that may not be related to their career goals, and few colleges use FWS funds for off-campus, private sector job development. Under the Experimental Sites Initiative authorized by section 487A(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, colleges are receiving waivers to allow them to increase the share of FWS funds used to develop off-campus employment and support students in those jobs, including full-time work required by their academic program (such as clinical rotations or student teaching). The Institute of Education Sciences is assessing whether participating in the FWS experiment changes colleges’ use of job development funds, the number of off-campus private sector jobs, and student wages.

## **Research Questions**

- What types of colleges participated in the Federal Work Study (FWS) Experiment, which FWS rules did they waive, and how did they implement those waivers?
- How does student participation in FWS compare to participation before the FWS experiment and to participation in other similar FWS colleges not in the experiment?
- Do FWS students in colleges implementing the waivers engage in more private sector employment, earn higher wages in FWS jobs, complete college at higher rates, or borrow less in student loans than do those in similar colleges not implementing the waivers?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study has two parts. The first describes the participating colleges and students, and how colleges implemented the FWS waivers using surveys of participating colleges and data from annual reporting to the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA). The second part uses a quasi-experimental design to

compare the differences in outcomes in participating colleges before and after the implementation of FWS waivers to changes in outcomes over the same period in other colleges that are similar but not participating in the FWS experiment. Outcome measures will be collected from FSA's student administrative records and annual reporting of campus-based program expenditures.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's first report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# School Choice

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization](#)
- [Impact Study of Magnet Schools](#)
- [Study of Charter School Admission Practices and Barriers to Growth](#)

## Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Data collection is underway	January 2019–October 2026

### **Background**

The DC Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) provides low-income students in Washington, DC with scholarships to attend one of the district's participating private schools. The OSP is the nation's only federally funded private school voucher program.

This third congressionally-mandated evaluation of the OSP intends to use different research methodologies and address different issues than the ones that came before. The previous evaluations (completed in 2011 and soon in 2019) relied on lotteries to award private school scholarships, creating the conditions for a random assignment study to determine the effectiveness of the program. Together, those earlier evaluations raised some questions about how well the program was improving student achievement and parent and student satisfaction with their schools. The current study reflects the prohibition on using lotteries for evaluation in the 2017 reauthorization of the OSP and interest in understanding how the program works and could be improved. The study includes analysis of program implementation and student outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

- What role does the program operator play in the OSP and how is their work carried out?
- What is the experience of applying for a scholarship and to participating private schools? Who uses/or doesn't use vouchers once one is offered and why?
- What is the experience using an OSP voucher? What are the challenges encountered and the supports available for overcoming them?
- What are the characteristics of teachers and the instruction they provide in the participating private schools versus in the public schools OSP users would otherwise attend?
- How do students using OSP vouchers to attend private schools perform and progress on math and reading assessments?
- How do parents of students using OSP vouchers and the students themselves rate their children's school in terms of safety and satisfaction?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The evaluation relies on a variety of data sources and collection methods, including interviews with the program operator, surveys of participating parents and schools, and collection of academic assessment information from schools for participating students to track their progress over time.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's first report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Study of Magnet Schools

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Data collection is underway	September 2017 - May 2024

### **Background**

Decades after the Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional, concentration in schools by race, ethnicity, and poverty persists. The federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) supports districts and schools in their efforts to reduce group isolation and improve student achievement through increased school choice options for families. MSAP schools seek to attract a diverse set of students and provide high quality academic programs, typically by organizing recruitment and instruction around one or more themes. With growth in school choice more broadly and specifically in magnet schools since 2000, it is important to understand how well these federally-funded schools achieve their goals and how they work. This evaluation takes advantage of new opportunities to rigorously assess MSAP schools but with low burden. It draws on lotteries most MSAP districts now use to admit students to their magnet schools. By comparing the achievement and school characteristics of applicants who were and were not given a seat by chance, the study will determine the impact of the MSAP and examine how specific school features relate to effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the impact of the magnet programs on student achievement and/or other relevant measures of student success such as persistence in school or graduation?
- What is the impact of the magnet program on the characteristics of the schools that the students attend, including whether they are higher performing or more diverse?
- Are particular features of magnet schools associated with greater success?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This impact evaluation includes over 14,500 students who entered MSAP admissions lotteries in 2018 or 2019 in 11 districts. Data are being collected for both students who were and were not offered placement, including district records containing student characteristics, enrollment, test scores, and other information, and a survey of students' school principals about school organization and instruction. The academic progress and experiences of students in the two groups will be compared for the four years following their admissions lottery (through 2023).

### **Publications and Products**

A snapshot, titled [Drawing Across School Boundaries: How Federally Funded Magnet Schools Recruit and Admit Students](#), was released in January 2021. The next report, on school diversity, is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Study of Charter School Admission Practices and Barriers to Growth

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Study design is being refined	September 2019 - September 2022

### **Background**

Policy makers are interested in understanding why charter school growth has recently slowed, especially given the more than \$400 million annual federal investment in expanding the sector. For example, the number of new charter schools increased by 7 percent for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years but by only 3 percent for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, with enrollment mirroring the trend. At the same time, there are reports that many charter schools have more applications than available seats. This study will examine where demand is greatest, how schools admit students when they cannot serve all those interested, and barriers to growth among charter schools both supported and not supported by the U.S. Department of Education’s Charter Schools Program (CSP).

### **Research Questions**

- How often are charter school admissions part of a larger choice process? What proportion participate in common applications and unified lotteries that include other charter schools and/or other choice options?
- When charter schools have more applicants than they can admit, how do they use admission preferences? Which schools have demand? How do these schools prioritize particular students, if at all?
- What barriers to expansion do charter schools face?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will be descriptive, based on a new nationally-representative survey of 2,000 charter schools that are funded and not funded by the CSP. The survey has been postponed until 2022 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study will be published in 2023 and announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# School Improvement

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
- [Impact Evaluation of Departmentalized Instruction in Elementary Schools](#)
- [Implementation of Key Federal Policies in the Wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives](#)
- [National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(Title IV, Part A\)](#)
- Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds
- [Study of School Improvement Plans and Their Implementation](#)
- [The Effects of a Systematic Approach to Improving Quality in Afterschool Programs: An Impact Evaluation to Inform the 21st Century Community Learning Centers \(CCLC\) Program](#)
- [Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods](#); listed above in the *Parent Engagement* topic area.
- Impact Study Using Technology to Accelerate Math Learning (anticipated)

## Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Data collection is underway	September 2019 - February 2024

### **Background**

Academic assessments can ideally serve multiple important purposes: diagnosing what students know to tailor instruction, assessing school performance for accountability, and monitoring both students and schools for improvement. To encourage the development of innovative assessments that better serve all of these purposes, the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) program was created in 2015 to allow the U.S. Department of Education to exempt states from certain federal testing requirements if they agree to pilot new types of assessment systems. Congress mandated an evaluation of IADA. The evaluation will chart pilot sites' progress and identify lessons learned for developing and implementing alternative assessments.

### **Research Questions**

- Why are states developing an innovative assessment system, and how are they expecting the system to accomplish their goals? How does the system compare to their existing assessments?
- Have states' innovative assessment systems been implemented with fidelity and met the core requirements of the federal pilot program after three years? To what extent have teachers, principals, and other school leaders demonstrated a commitment and capacity to implement the innovative assessment system?
- What were the key challenges to developing an innovative assessment system, piloting it, and scaling it up? How were the challenges addressed, and how did participation in the federal pilot program facilitate or impede the process?
- How have districts, schools, and teachers perceived and adapted to the innovative assessment system? How have practices related to instruction, professional development, and burden under the innovative assessment system compared to practices under the states' existing assessments?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This implementation study will focus on the four pilot states: Louisiana and New Hampshire (approved in 2018); Georgia and North Carolina (approved in 2019). The study will be based on states' IADA applications and annual progress reporting, interviews with state assessment directors and surveys of participating districts, schools, and teachers.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Evaluation of Departmentalized Instruction in Elementary Schools

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Report preparation is underway	September 2017 - September 2022

### **Background**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, most recently reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), supports efforts to deploy the educator workforce efficiently and effectively. One promising strategy is departmentalized instruction, where each teacher specializes in teaching one subject to multiple classes of students instead of teaching all subjects to a single class of students (self-contained instruction). Departmentalization is nearly ubiquitous in secondary schools, but has only recently become more common in upper elementary schools. Despite the growing popularity of this approach to organizing teachers' instruction, virtually no evidence exists on its effectiveness relative to the more traditional self-contained approach. This evaluation was originally intended to fill the gap by examining the impact of departmentalizing fourth and fifth grade teachers in a large number of low-performing elementary schools across the country. However, the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the implementation of departmentalization in participating schools and the schools' administration of state assessments of student achievement that the study intended to draw on. Instead, the study will describe lessons learned in switching to this way of organizing teachers in schools.

### **Research Questions**

- How do schools structure departmentalization?
- What challenges and benefits do principals and teachers perceive in switching from self-contained classrooms to departmentalization?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

A total of 90 elementary schools in 12 districts across the country were recruited to participate in the study. All schools were using self-contained classrooms during the 2018-19 school year. Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, approximately half of these schools chose to switch to departmentalized instruction in fourth grade and fifth grade (treatment), while the remaining schools chose to continue with self-contained classrooms (comparison). The study will collect data from principal interviews, to learn how teacher assignments were made and departmentalization was structured, and teacher surveys to examine their perceptions of and approaches to departmentalization.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Implementation of Key Federal Policies in the Wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 1. Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty	Report preparation is underway	April 2020 - March 2022

### **Background**

The coronavirus pandemic continued to significantly disrupt K-12 educational systems across the country during the 2020-21 school year. State agencies and local leaders appear to be taking unprecedented action in the wake of the pandemic to manage continuity in school operations, tackle learning loss, and address concerns about increasing equity gaps for particularly vulnerable students. This quick turnaround study focuses on how education officials carried out, and were supported by, federal policies like those associated with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

### **Research Questions**

- How did the coronavirus pandemic affect key school operations during the 2020-21 school year?
- How is the pandemic influencing ESSA implementation?
- How is CARES Act funding being used to support recovery?
- To what extent are states and districts addressing equity in their recovery efforts?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The study is descriptive. It is based on Spring 2021 surveys of state representatives from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and a nationally representative survey of 550 school districts.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Study design is being refined	September 2011 - September 2023

### **Background**

Each time the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is reauthorized there is a shift in federal policies related to K-12 schooling, including in ESEA's two core programs. Accounting for about \$19 billion of \$26 billion in ESEA funds in fiscal year 2020, Title I and Title II-A encourage equal access to education by providing financial assistance to schools and districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families (Title I) and by improving teacher and principal quality (Title II-A).

ESEA's latest reauthorization as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 shifts authority over many education decisions and rules from the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) to states and localities. The new law also retains some federal requirements from prior versions of ESEA to help ensure that states focus on providing a high-quality education to disadvantaged students. How states and localities respond to this combination of flexibility and requirements will determine whether ESSA stimulates educational improvement as intended.

This study provides a national portrait of Title I and Title II-A implementation at several key time points:

- **2013-14**, when the Department had already begun to provide states with waivers from key requirements under ESSA's predecessor, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, in exchange for commitments to specific reform principles, colloquially known as "ESEA flexibility."
- **2017-18**, when the Department approved most states' ESSA plans, marking a transition year to fully implementing ESSA's core components.
- **2020-21**, the first full school year following the initial COVID-19 pandemic, which may affect state and local plans for implementing ESSA.
- **2021-22**, when ESSA implementation is expected to be in a more mature phase.

### **Research Questions**

- What content standards and high school graduation requirements are states adopting, and what materials and resources are provided to support implementation?
- What types of assessments do states and districts use, and what materials and resources are provided to support the implementation of assessments and use of assessment data?
- What elements are included in states' accountability systems? How do states and districts identify and support their lowest-performing schools?

- How do states and districts evaluate educator effectiveness and assess equitable distribution of educators, and what supports are provided to improve educator effectiveness?
- How has student achievement changed over time?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

National data will be collected at times that correspond to the key points described earlier. In any year, these data may include surveys of all state Title I and Title II coordinators and nationally-representative samples of districts, schools, and teachers. The evaluation also draws on existing data, such as state-level student academic proficiency that states report to the Department, state-level math and reading achievement data from the Department's National Assessment of Educational Progress, and information from ESSA state plans.

Responses to survey questions will be tabulated into descriptive statistics (such as percentages) and simple statistical tests (such as tests for differences between percentages). These tabulations provide a snapshot at each time point, as well as aggregate changes over time. The study is descriptive and not designed to estimate the impact of federal policies on state and local actions.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report, titled [Implementation of Title I and II-A Program Initiatives: Results from 2013-14](#), was released in January 2017.

A snapshot, titled [How States and Districts Support Evidence Use in School Improvement](#), was released in June 2020.

The second report, titled [The Transition to ESSA: State and District Approaches to Implementing Title I and Title II-A in 2017-18](#), was released in December 2020.

A [restricted-use file](#) containing de-identified data is available for the purposes of replicating study findings and secondary analysis.

Additional reports and snapshots are expected to be published in 2021 and 2024 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Study design is being refined	June 2019 - August 2023

### **Background**

Changes to education law in 2015 consolidated several programs to give states and districts greater flexibility in how they use federal funds. The resulting Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program (Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)) tries to maintain the different purposes of the original programs by prioritizing and requiring spending in three broad areas: (1) providing students with a well-rounded education, (2) ensuring a positive school environment, and (3) improving and personalizing learning through technology. The new law also requires districts to consult with stakeholders, distribute Title IV-A funds to high-need schools and, in certain instances, to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and use evidence from research to pick strategies to fund. This evaluation will assess how this new program is being carried out across the country, particularly the ways in which it supports school systems as they seek to recover from the coronavirus pandemic during the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Research Questions**

- What guidance and technical assistance did states provide to districts to assist in local implementation of the Title IV-A program?
- How do districts decide how to use Title IV-A funds?
- What are the primary services and activities districts are implementing with Title IV-A funds?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The study is descriptive. It will be based on a survey of Title IV-A coordinators from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and a nationally representative survey of Title IV-A coordinators in 1,200 school districts.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Data collection is underway	October 2019-March 2024

### Background

Federal funds, which account for less than 10 percent of K-12 education spending nationally, can play an important role, particularly in communities that are lower-income or have lower-performing schools. Although each federal education program has unique goals and provisions, they often allow funds to be used for similar purposes and services or overlapping populations. Congress provided state and local education agencies greater flexibility in their use of federal funds through the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Congress also created the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide funding and flexibilities for states and districts to respond to the COVID-19 emergency in K-12 schools.

Policymakers remain interested in how federal dollars are spent. This study will examine how funds are distributed and used from the CARES Act as well as five major federal education programs: Part A of Titles I, II, III, and IV of ESEA, and Title I, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Together, the non-CARES Act programs account for about 80 percent of total funding for the Department's elementary-secondary programs, or \$32 billion.

### Research Questions

- **Where does the money go?** To what extent are federal funds – including those from the CARES Act – reaching the districts and schools with the greatest needs?
- **What do federal programs add?** How much do the federal programs in this study increase the level of per-pupil funding over what is provided through state and local sources? How does this vary across districts and schools?
- **What does the money buy?** To what extent do districts and schools use federal funds for instructional staff, professional development, technology, student support services, and other resources? How does spending from federal funds differ from state and local spending? How do local agencies use funding from different sources to support, for example, the education of students with disabilities?
- **To what extent do districts make use of flexibilities provided through ESEA, IDEA, and the CARES Act?**

### Design and Analytic Considerations

This descriptive study will collect detailed fiscal data from the data systems of a nationally representative sample of 400 school districts, including revenue, expenditure, and personnel and payroll data, for up to four consecutive school years: 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. In

addition, the study will collect data on federal funding allocations from states to school districts and from districts to schools, and conduct interviews in a smaller set of districts to examine how districts and schools use various funding sources to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report is expected in 2021 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Study of School Improvement Plans and Their Implementation

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Study design is being refined	October 2019-March 2023

### **Background**

Decades of educational reforms have demonstrated that turning around the lowest-performing schools in the U.S. remains a complex challenge. Federal policies, including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, seek to boost these efforts by requiring that states identify those schools needing comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), have them create a plan for improvement, and provide additional support to help the schools expand capacity and student progress. Compared with prior laws, ESSA allows states and districts greater flexibility to shape their approach to school improvement. This study will examine implementation of ESSA's CSI provisions in order to understand how states, districts, and schools are responding to the new requirements.

### **Research Questions**

- To what extent have states altered the number and types of schools identified for significant support after ESSA's flexibilities were phased in?
- In what ways do the identified CSI schools organize instruction and services differently other schools? How are states and school districts monitoring implementation?
- Do CSI schools receive and use resources differently than other schools?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study will examine existing U.S. Department of Education data on schools identified for significant support before and after ESSA, as well as data on a nationally representative sample of CSI schools collected as part of other IES studies.

### **Publications and Products**

A first report, describing the number and characteristics of CSI schools, is expected in 2022. The study's final report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# [The Effects of a Systematic Approach to Improving Quality in Afterschool Programs: An Impact Evaluation to Inform the 21st Century Community Learning Centers \(CCLC\) Program](#)

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Recruitment is underway	July 2019 - June 2025

## **Background**

The time students spend outside of school hours, including after school, can be important opportunities for their social and academic development. The 21st CCLC program intends to provide these opportunities by funding a broad range of academic enrichment activities in community learning centers, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. But little is known about the extent and diversity of recent program activities, or whether a systematic approach to support program quality could improve staff practices and student outcomes. This evaluation will produce a national picture of funded program activities and program improvement efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of a continuous quality improvement system aimed at improving staff practices to support students' social and emotional skills.

## **Research Questions**

- What are the impacts of the studied continuous quality improvement system on 21st CCLC afterschool centers' staff practices? What are the impacts on students' social and emotional skills and other school-related student outcomes?
- What are the challenges with implementing the continuous quality improvement system, and how are they addressed?
- What are the activities and services offered by 21st CCLC afterschool centers? How are they staffed and supported to meet local needs?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To assess the effectiveness of the continuous quality improvement (CQI) system, approximately 100 21st CCLC afterschool centers will be recruited to participate in an impact study. Half of the participating centers will be selected by lottery to implement the CQI system supported by the study for two school years, and half will continue their normally planned program. The impact study will compare staff practices and student outcomes for the two groups of centers. Information also will be collected on program operations and staff training and experiences with the CQI system. Data collection includes afterschool center director interviews, an afterschool staff survey, observations of

program quality at each center, student survey and afterschool attendance records, administrative school records, and a school-day teacher survey. The national picture of program activities will be based on a survey of a nationally representative sample of 250 21st CCLC afterschool centers.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Students with Disabilities

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act](#)
- [Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices](#); described above in the [Early Learning](#) topic area.
- [Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School](#); listed above in the [Literacy](#) topic area.
- Impact Evaluation of Training and Assistance for Staff Supporting Students with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom (anticipated)

## Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 5. Increasing postsecondary education access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success	Study design is being refined	September 2019 - May 2022

### **Background**

Students with disabilities continue to lag their peers in high school graduation, enrollment in postsecondary education, and employment more than a decade after the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A central goal of IDEA is to help students with disabilities prepare for their transition from secondary school to further education, work, and independent living. To achieve this goal, IDEA requires the provision of transition services focused on improving students' academic and functional achievement in accordance with their individualized education program. Although studies suggest the importance of certain types of preparation for students with disabilities, there is limited evidence about the effectiveness of those or other strategies to promote post high school outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

- What is known about the effectiveness of transition strategies? And for whom?
- How might an impacts evaluation of a promising transition strategy be designed?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The study will summarize available evidence on the effectiveness of transition supports and interview transition stakeholders to identify promising transition strategies and methods for studying them. ED will make a decision by 2021 about conducting an impact study based on this work.

### **Publications and Products**

The systematic evidence review is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Study design is being refined	September 2017 - March 2024

### **Background**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) is the most recent reauthorization of a law passed in 1975 to promote a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities. Funded at \$12.9 billion in FY 2017, IDEA supports early intervention services for infants and toddlers identified as having a disability or at risk of substantial developmental delay. IDEA also supports special education and related services for children and youth ages 3 through 21 identified as having a disability, as well as coordinated early intervening services for children and youth who are not identified as needing special education but who need additional support to succeed in a general education environment.

This evaluation will provide a more current picture of state agency and school district implementation of IDEA, building on a study conducted in 2009. Since then, new court decisions were issued, other educational legislation has been passed, and new regulations and guidance have been released by the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education, including a requirement that states use a standardized methodology to determine disproportionality in the identification, placement, and discipline of students with disabilities based on race or ethnicity. Finally, the knowledge base on effective and promising policies and practices has grown. All of these shifts could influence the context and implementation of special education and early intervention in ways that will be important to understand when IDEA is reauthorized.

### **Research Questions**

- How do states and districts identify infants, toddlers, children, and youth for early intervention and special education services? How do they measure disproportionate identification and what policies and practices have been implemented with the goal of addressing disproportionate identification?
- What policies and programs do states and districts have in place to support infants, toddlers, children, and youth identified for early intervention or special education services? How have these policies and programs changed over time?
- To what extent do states and districts rely on evidence on the effectiveness of policies, programs, and supports for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities?

- How do states and districts allocate resources - including funding and personnel - to support infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities?
- What types of supports do schools provide to children and youth with disabilities to support their academic and behavioral learning, both within and outside of general education classrooms?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

Data collection included surveys of state administrators from all states, the District of Columbia, and territories receiving IDEA funding, as well as surveys of a nationally representative sample of school districts and schools during the 2019-20 school year. The data from these surveys are being analyzed to describe policies and practices in a series of reports.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Teachers and Leaders

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Impact Evaluation of Teacher Residency Programs](#)
- [Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program](#)
- [Impact Study of Feedback for Teachers Based on Classroom Videos](#)

## Impact Evaluation of Teacher Residency Programs

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 3. Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning	Recruitment is underway	September 2019 - June 2025

### **Background**

Teacher residency programs are rapidly increasing in popularity, as a potential way to address persistent inequities in student access to high quality teachers. This form of teacher preparation combines coursework with extensive on-the-job training in schools under the guidance of experienced mentors. The programs also place new graduates in hard-to-staff positions, most often in the same low-income or lower-performing districts where they trained. This approach may be promising, as underscored by recent changes in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which now allows states and districts to use Title II funds to support teacher residencies. But so far there is little evidence that they are more successful than other ways of preparing teachers to work in high need schools. This study will provide an in-depth description of all current teacher residency programs in the United States and provide the first large-scale assessment of the effectiveness and retention of teachers from these programs.

### **Research Questions**

- Are residency graduates more effective and do they remain in teaching longer than teachers prepared by non-residency preparation programs?
- What explains any differences in teacher effectiveness and retention between residency and non-residency program graduates?
- What are the core features and strategies used to prepare teachers across residency programs?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To estimate the effectiveness and retention of residency graduates, the evaluation will randomly assign approximately 8,400 students to classes taught by 350 teachers from residency or non-residency preparation programs. This will ensure that the residency and non-residency graduates teach similar students under similar circumstances, so that comparing student achievement and tenure in teaching for the two groups provides a reliable measure of the residency training's effectiveness. Data collected will include teacher surveys, classroom observations, and administrative records (including student assessments) to describe differences in the preparation experiences, satisfaction, teaching practices, and retention of residency and non-residency graduates and their students' achievement. Interviews with the directors of all 140 residency programs across the country will inform the description of program features.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study, the description of residency programs nationally, is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 3. Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning	Site recruitment is underway	September 2018 - August 2023

## **Background**

Effective school leadership and teaching are at the heart of school improvement. Human capital management - the way in which a district makes and implements preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, and tenure and promotion decisions - can play an important role in supporting effective educators. The purpose of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive (TSL) program is to develop and implement performance-based compensation systems or human capital management systems to improve student achievement. Grantees plan to implement multiple strategies, with a role for teacher leaders being the one strategy that is the most common among the 2017 awards. This mandated evaluation will provide implementation information from all 2017 grantees, with particular attention to teacher leader selection, roles, and supports. In addition, the study will estimate the impact on student achievement and teacher satisfaction and retention of using teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

## **Research Questions**

- What are the implementation experiences of the 2017 TSL grantees toward the end of their three years with funding? What are their educator satisfaction, recruitment and retention experiences with TSL, particularly among those grantees funding teacher leader roles?
- What is the effect on student achievement, educator satisfaction, recruitment, and retention of a teacher leader role strategy? Is the teacher leader strategy cost effective?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The evaluation will first provide information about implementation of the TSL program, based on a summer 2020 survey of all 14 TSL grantees receiving awards in 2017. In addition, about 80 schools are participating in an impact evaluation of funding teacher leaders to support their peers using activities similar to that funded within the TSL grantees. For the impact study, data collection will include: teacher and principal surveys to collect program implementation information as well as educator satisfaction and teacher recruitment activities and outcomes; teacher leader activity forms to provide information about teacher leader roles and activities; teacher and principal school assignment records to look at mobility and retention; and student administrative records to look at student outcomes.

## **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Impact Study of Feedback for Teachers Based on Classroom Videos

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 3. Supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning	Report preparation is underway	September 2016 - July 2022

## **Background**

Helping teachers be as effective as possible remains a key national priority, given their role in student success. Classroom management and instructional practices are foundational to effective teaching, but mostly a struggle for lower-performing teachers and those early in their career to do well. This is particularly problematic because these teachers disproportionately work in high-need schools where strong teaching is essential to close student achievement gaps. This study will expand the currently limited evidence on how to improve teacher practices to increase student achievement. It evaluates one promising strategy – individualized written feedback and coaching based on videos of classroom teaching. Using videos has the benefit of allowing the coach to show the teacher his or her own practice during the feedback session. Because coaching can be costly, the study tested and will provide information about the effectiveness of differing amounts of coaching.

## **Research Questions**

- Is this kind of written feedback and one-on-one coaching based on videos of their classroom practices effective? Does it have an impact on teaching practices and student achievement?
- Does more intensive coaching produce better results? Are both 5 rounds and 8 rounds of feedback effective at similar levels and what is the implication for cost-effectiveness?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The effectiveness study included approximately 350 fourth- or fifth-grade teachers in over 100 elementary schools from 14 districts across the country. Schools were randomly assigned into three groups, with their teachers receiving either 8 rounds of coaching, 5 rounds of coaching, or no coaching from the study. Teachstone was selected through a competition to provide the virtual coaching largely because their program, My Teaching Partner, already had some evidence of effectiveness in a smaller-scale study. Data collection included: Teachstone's online platform and coach logs to provide information on implementation; a teacher survey to gather information on teacher characteristics and professional development experiences; teacher observations to provide information about classroom practice; and administrative records to assess students' state math and English language arts achievement for school years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

## **Publications and Products**

The report for the study, which will examine the impact of the intervention for teachers, is expected in 2021 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Technical Assistance

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2022:

- [Evaluation of Investing in Innovation](#)
- [National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees](#)
- Evaluation of the Regional Educational Laboratories Program, 2022-2027 Cycle (anticipated)

## Evaluation of Investing in Innovation

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 2. Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and welcoming environments	Report preparation is underway	September 2010 - December 2021

### **Background**

The Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund, established by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), awarded competitive grants to school districts and nonprofits to implement and evaluate educational interventions to improve student academic outcomes. This unique “tiered evidence” program awarded three different kinds of grants with the funding amounts aligned to the strength of the prior evidence supporting the proposed intervention as well as the scale of implementation proposed by grantees. Because learning about the effectiveness of the funded interventions was a key i3 priority, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) is conducting an Evaluation of i3 that (1) provides comprehensive technical assistance to local evaluators for all grantees, and (2) summarizes both the quality of and findings from the evaluations. This IES evaluation includes the 172 i3 grantees who received in total more than \$1.4 billion across seven cohorts of grants from 2010 through 2016.

### **Research Questions**

- Were the i3 evaluations strong?
- Did the i3 evaluations find the interventions to be implemented with adequate fidelity?
- Did the i3 evaluations find the interventions improved student academic outcomes?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The IES evaluation’s technical assistance to the grantees’ independent evaluators is comprehensive and customized to the interventions and to the evaluators’ designs and capacities. A separate team reviews the quality of the evaluations designed and carried out by the grantee evaluators to determine whether they meet several criteria used to define a strong study and summarizes the results of the i3 evaluations.

### **Publications and Products**

The final report of the project, titled *The Investing in Innovation Fund: Summary of 67 Evaluations*, was released in June 2018.

Data files containing publicly-available information on the impact and implementation findings from the i3 grants whose evaluations are included in the 2018 report are available for the purposes of secondary analysis.

An overview of what was learned from the i3 program, including updates to the summary tables and exhibits in the June 2018 report, is expected in 2021.

# National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees

Priority Area	Current Status	Duration
Priority 4. Meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs	Study design is being refined	September 2020 - September 2022

## **Background**

The 2015 update to the federal law governing K-12 schooling gave state (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) increased responsibilities, and, therefore, extra demands on their time and capabilities. The Comprehensive Centers program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education at over \$50 million per year, provides training, tools, and other supports to help these agencies carry out their education plans and take steps to close achievement gaps. The Centers' services aim to build individual and organizational capacity to help identify and solve key problems. This evaluation will examine the delivery and usefulness of the Centers' technical assistance, given potential new stakeholder needs and changes in the Center program that took effect with the 20 new grants awarded in in 2019. Congress requires a periodic evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers program, with the results intended to inform ongoing program improvements.

## **Research Questions**

- What key educational problems are the Comprehensive Centers addressing?
- What capacity-building services are Comprehensive Centers providing and what types of capacity are these services designed to increase?
- What are the successes and challenges of program changes, including the shift in the number and geographic reach of the centers and new requirements to increase collaboration with the Department's Regional Educational Laboratories?
- How can the outcome of the Comprehensive Centers – improving state and local agency capacity – be measured accurately, validly, and reliably?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The descriptive study will be based on document reviews, surveys and interviews of SEA and LEA staff, and interviews with Comprehensive Center and REL project directors. The study team will develop measures of SEA capacity by reviewing existing survey and assessment items that gauge similar concepts, interviewing stakeholders, and conducting pilot testing with SEA and district stakeholders.

## **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2022 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

###